

Seattle Light Rail Review Panel

Meeting Notes for November 7, 2001

Agenda Items

- Maintenance Base Facility (changes to 90% design)
- Beacon Hill Station

Commissioners Present

Rick Sundberg, Chair
Paul Tomita
Don Royse
Matthew Kitchen
Jay Lazerwitz
Mimi Sheridan

Staff Present

Debora Ashland, Sound Transit
Cheryl Sizov, CityDesign
Kathy A Dockins, CityDesign

LRRP Business

LRRP business was deferred until later in the meeting.

Maintenance Base Facility/Changes to 90% Design

Mike Merrick, Sound Transit

Mike Merrick gave an update on the Maintenance Base Facility, currently nearing the construction phase, and approaching 90% completion for submittal to DCLU for a permit. He was joined by Greg Baldwin, who noted that the project had matured a great deal since ST's last presentation. He also outlined the changes that have been made to reduce costs, but assured us that the integrity of the project remains:

- Maintenance of Way building deferred.
- The landscaping has been reorganized to align the throat of the entrance and make it more like a street/corridor.
- The truck shop has also changed; there will be no "lantern" walking along it. It's too expensive, and there is a concern about having that much glass in a shop. It's been changed to concrete.
- There have been subtle changes to the rhythm of the pedestrian/visitor walk ramp.
- There has been no real change to the light monitors other than the art project has been eliminated.
- The siding material has been changed to something less likely to collect dirt, and more likely to wash clean in the rain.
- The brick color has also been changed so it will be light enough to see on a dark grey day, but dark enough to show the color.

Discussion

Beverly Barnett from SeaTran noted she is here to follow the evolution of the Maintenance Base Facility and to keep on top of the urban design impacts and public benefit of the vacation portion. Also concerned about traffic issues becoming a problem later.

- What remains of the art project? *(The light monitor has been deleted. The light monitors were the only aspect of the arts program; our only interest was to provide the light monitors with saturated color. If that's gone, we have nothing.)*

- There seems to be a reduction in the number of trees. Will those be reinstated in the second phase? *(Yes, if they were put in now they'd just be torn out when the second phase begins.)*
- The artistic facet of the lighting was intended to be a part of the public benefit package necessary for the vacation. *(We didn't put any money into the Maintenance Base Facility budget at 38.5% per LRRP direction. (We needed to cut back on costs and that's where the cut took place.)*
- Will the monitors be lit at night? *(Yes, some light will spill out of the shop, but there will be no uplighting and it won't be colored.)*
- So the original intent remains; it's just not colored. Has the lantern been turned into a concrete wall?
- I actually like it better, especially the way the concrete is finished.
- Compositionally, the building still makes some sense; one can still see into the shop. I like the way the alignment has been readjusted visually. But we will really have to sort through the public benefit since the art element is completely gone. Its educational component and the fact that it's open to the public is okay, but we have to build an argument that the street vacations are valid. The neighborhood doesn't need to be gentrified.
- The presence or absence of colored lights alone is not enough to base a decision on; it's not a deal-breaker.
- The educational benefit is definitely important. But we told ST to focus on where the public enters the building and put some art there, without saying, "There's no budget." I like the brick color, but not the glass color. It should be more industrial, not green. *That's just in the drawing; the glass will be clear. It's hard to portray clear glass in a rendering; our other option was black.*
- How has the Design Commission defined "public benefit" in a street vacation? I want to be sure we're using the same definition.
- I just want to be clear with ST that if we leave the art behind, we still have enough other public benefits to justify the vacation. *(Beverly: I do think public benefit will be an issue. The Council looks for something beyond benefits included in the organization's mission or any physical improvements. They want something tangible. Art is small, but it adds up to items of intrigue/interest to the public.)*
- Is it mitigation?
- Yes, I suppose, although I don't like that term. A couple of things about this project are unique: it's well-designed, and the shop bays with the monitors as a defining element at night. It could have been a tilt-up concrete building.
- I'm very happy that the light monitors and articulation and transparency of bays are still intact; that is a big public benefit considering what could have occurred.
- We also discussed the economic benefits with Alaskan Copper.
- A possible benefit is the aggregation of property; may make ingress and egress cleaner, which would be a benefit to freight mobility. Of course, that hasn't been proven yet. *(Greg: Art was never intended to be mitigation; that word reminds me of apologizing for sinning. What we have tried to do as a public benefit is make an essentially introverted building extroverted. Having the shop lighted at night is not a singular gesture; it's part of a broad gesture that includes the ramp. It opens the building to visitors and the public.)*
- Can we recapture some of the intent of the colored lighting? Could we paint the roof a different color, or use paint colors that will reflect light differently? *(That might not be good for the workers. We have to make sure we don't create weird lighting conditions for the employees.)*
- The reason I am asking about the definition of public benefit is because the benefit is supposed to be in exchange for giving up the right-of-way. Or oriented around the urban context that is created because of the project. Remember this is a maintenance facility.
- I want to make sure the right questions have been asked and discussion has happened. It sounds like LRRP will still support the stronger public benefits of the facility, like landscaping and the ramp, while

dismissing the art project. It's important that ST articulate its design principles very carefully, but it sounds like we think it's okay for them to go ahead.

- It's clear that design considerations have been given to visitors. Is there a programmatic component to this? *(ST feels it has the responsibility to give back to the community and an obligation to show the public how the system works. We hope the design will promote an understanding of the light rail project.)*
- So we approve the design in spite of the art loss? We want to put this into action?
- Yes.

The Panel then voted to approve the changes to the Maintenance Base Facility 90% design. Thanks for bringing this back. Paul added that it has been a joy, especially compared to McClellan station. Debora asked for clarification of whether the motion constituted approval for both the vacation and the design? Rick indicated yes.

LRRP Business

Paul moved to approve the October 3, 2001 meeting notes, provided they are reviewed and "tidied up" by Cheryl. The motion passed.

ST Update on MLK Corridor Work

Debora Ashland, Sound Transit

Debora told the Panel about the C-Link meeting re: MLK that took place last Friday, and passed out an expanded version of the schedule she gave us a month ago covering signaling, other Sasaki work, and undergrounding of utilities. Two tracks (baseline with overhead, also still revising estimates for undergrounding); should have an undergrounding decision by the end of the year.

The C-Link meeting was mostly Q and A. There were questions regarding safety, lane widths, emergency vehicle response time (6" non-mountable curbs), fencing and thorny bushes. There will be landscaping only at either end of the trackway, not at the intersections. Also, no fence along the length of the trackway; just at the stations. There were also questions regarding the 8' wide sidewalk, due to taking a building. It's becoming a topic south of Henderson. Otherwise, 10' 3" is standard.

ST is in contract negotiations with Arai-Jackson and OTAK. The preliminary engineering for Beacon Hill starts on Monday and should be completed by February 2002. February '02 is also when final design begins on McClellan Station.

SE 730/730 – January 2, 2002, for one year, bringing civil on board as needed.

Beacon Hill Station Update

Greg Ball, Sound Transit

Allen Parsons, Sound Transit

Mike Williams, Sound Transit

Work on the Beacon Hill station is gearing up again now that the Board has voted to include this a completed station as part of Airport/South Link. The design has been revised from earlier work and now consists of:

- A single headhouse instead of two (there is dry-cleaning fluid contamination on the site of the western headhouse)

- One main access shaft, 160' deep, with a 2nd smaller one for ventilation—working with the Fire Department to detail this
- There will be four high-speed elevators from grade to the 15' wide platform, with cross passages for emergency purposes only
- Projected to carry 3000 passengers/day in 2020
- Will be built with funding saved from deferring the Boeing Access Road station

Sound Transit staff always felt this was a high use station. We'll be going back out to the community in February 2002 with 30% drawings. Dan Corson is assigned to work with on the art again with the architectural consultants. We presently prefer a single penthouse. This is a changing area regarding demographics. Link will have a big impact on the future of Beacon Hill.

Discussion

- Why is the staging area so big? *(Yes, it is big. A single owner owns four parcels there so it is easier to work with him. It is also a good TOD opportunity. The South China Restaurant will lose their business because we'll need to take their building and parking lot. But we'll help them relocate too. This is zoned NC40 with a pedestrian overlay.)*
- Is there an urban designer on the team or someone to maximize TOD opportunities? It seems like that could really work well here. *(The OTAK team includes Murase and some TOD work in the scope. Scott Kirkpatrick is the new Sound Transit employee for TOD work.)*
- I really recommend that you redevelop there. *(We have baseline budget to build a station.)*
- If it is well-planning with community involvement, you can program the space and identify specific proposals for uses.
- Maybe the Red Apple will want to redevelop in five years? Make sure development space gets made into something useful after Sound Transit is done with it, but before the redevelopment happens. *(The single shaft in Lander Street helps to maximize plaza property.)*
- We don't want to see a chopped up footprint—keep it developable.
- I am eager to see more of this station.

No action was taken, and the meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.